



UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON GRAFENWÖHR RETIREE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 2007

FROM THE GARRISON COMMANDER:

We are very excited about this new issue of the Garrison Retiree Newsletter and anticipate that it will serve as yet another venue to reach the great Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and their spouses who honorably served our Nation and are living within our growing footprint. I am committed to supporting you, and have empowered my Retirement Services Officer and Retiree Councils to provide you with quality service.

We are excited about our new status as the largest Army community in Europe, but are fully aware of the responsibilities and challenges that come with this standing. We want to ensure that our Retirees are fully informed of the latest in developments and news that directly affect them.

We are also aware that many of you do not have the latest in communications technology and rely on regular mail and bulletin boards for your information. In addition to this newsletter, we will also establish a bulletin board at the new Commissary and PX complex to provide announcements and news that affect you.

I encourage all Retirees, their spouses and widows to contact the RSO or Council with your questions. If we do not have the answer locally, we will send it up through the chain of command for response. That's my commitment to the Retiree Community.

Colonel Brian T. Boyle, Commander

FROM THE GRAFENWÖHR RETIREE COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND GARRISON RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICER (RSO):

We wish to extend greetings to all of the military Retirees, their spouses and widows who live within the Grafenwöhr Garrison. As Colonel Boyle said our Community will soon be the Army's largest in Europe. In September we will open the largest AAFES and DECA facilities supporting the Army in this theater.

In addition, services will increase to match the needs of our expanding community. It is appropriate therefore, that we provide an additional venue to give our constituency the latest information on retiree information and services. We will accomplish this through our Garrison Retiree Newsletter designed to support our retired military family. Through it, we will keep our retiree population informed on the latest changes, developments and issues that affect retirees living in Europe.

We also want to hear from you, your questions and comments are important to us. Feel free to contact either of us if you have a retiree issue. Your questions often affect the broader audience, and when they do we will include those issues in this newsletter.

MSG (Ret.) James Federline, RC President
Tel: 09641-83-7452/james.federline@us.army.mil

Ms. Joan Serpa, RSO
Tel: 09641-83-8539/joan.serpa@eur.army.mil

FROM THE BERLIN RETIREE COUNCIL PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Berlin Military Retiree/Widow community, I would like to express our appreciation for the outstanding support we continue to receive from the Commander, USAG Grafenwöhr, especially from the Retirement Service Officer and the Grafenwöhr Retiree Council. Recently we had the death of a retiree in the Berlin area. A Casualty Assistance Officer was appointed and worked closely with the surviving widow. A Military Funeral Honors team complete with Bugler was present at the interment. We are very proud of the professionalism displayed by of your Casualty Assistance Officer and Military Funeral Honors team. It reflects great credit upon themselves, the United States Army and our nation and leaves a very positive and lasting impression with the next of kin of the deceased.

SGM (Ret) JC Moss, Berlin RC President

GRAFENWÖHR RETIREE COUNCIL

President - James Federline, MSG (USA -Ret)

Secretary - Ray C. Vellis, SSG (USA-Ret)

Members-At-Large:

Doug Kramer, LTC (USAF - Ret)

Larry Simank, CW3 (USA-Ret)

Jessie Cabredo, SSG (USA-Ret)

Dave Stewart, SGM (USA-Ret)

Erika Smith, Surviving Spouse

BERLIN RETIREE COUNCIL

President - James C. Moss, SGM (USA -Ret)

Vice President - Joe Kidd, MSG (USA-Ret)

Secretary – Dr. Silvia Rice, Surviving Spouse

RSO Liaison - Myrle Saunders, SFC (USA-Ret)

Members-At-Large:

Robert Jumper, MSG (USA-Ret)

Roger Lusk, SFC (USA-Ret)

RETIREE COMMAND INFORMATION AFN AND STARS AND STRIPES: There is no reason to feel isolated from the military command information link. Satellite and internet technology has made it possible for retirees to keep informed on financial and medical information, and other command and retiree information that affect you. TV-SAT Decoders are available for purchase at AAFES exchanges and retirees are authorized to purchase these devices, which can bring several channels of stateside news and entertainment. The price of these Decoders has dropped significantly in the past year. Up-to- date information is also available on line. The daily Stars and Stripes is available on line at no charge at <http://www.stripesonline.com>.

AKO CHANGES: GUEST SPONSORSHIP POLICY CHANGE:

The Army Knowledge on Line Web Site and email AKO guest sponsorship policy for Army Retirees has changed. Army Retirees are now only able to sponsor guests who can be verified as dependent family members in DEERS. Unverified family members and other guests will not be allowed to use Army Retirees as their sponsors. Retirees who are currently sponsoring guests who are not a verified family member do not have to take any immediate action; however, these guests will not be eligible for reapproval or reactivation by the Army retiree. To avoid locking guests out of AKO, Retirees should make sure that all sponsored dependents are verified, and that other sponsored guests are given new sponsors before their revoke date.

RETIREE BULLETIN BOARD: The Retiree Council has requested a Retiree Bulletin Board be installed at the new PX/ Commissary complex and the AAFES/DECA Council has approved the concept. This is yet another means to bring the news affecting our retiree to YOU, our targeted audience! The Retiree Council will be responsible for keeping the bulletin board up-to-date with the latest information.

RETIREE POSTAL PRIVILEGES AND MILITARY CUSTOMS:

Retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces (not civilian employees) and their widow(er) s can apply to use the Army Post Office system after retirement. To obtain APO privileges, you must make arrangements with the local APO to receive your mail through "Box R" (General Delivery Mail Section). Your mail must be addressed to "Box R" of the APO concerned and the address must include the word "retired" (e.g., U.S. Army Ret"). You must pick up your mail at the APO and take any parcels received unopened to German customs for clearance. The postal officer will tell you which German customs office to go to and advise you of any restrictions on package size, If you fail to present parcels to German Customs within a reasonable time, (about one week), you may lose APO privileges for the remainder of your stay in Germany. These procedures and restrictions are based on arrangements between the Customs Executive Agent and the German Ministry of Finance and cannot be changed unilaterally by the U.S. Forces. The system works well and deliberate abuse of the present arrangements by you could endanger a privilege enjoyed by many hundreds.

Information provided by the Grafenwöhr Military Customs Office

2007 USAG GRAFENWÖHR RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY AND OPEN HOUSE

Looking for something to do on a crisp October Saturday morning? Why not check out the USAG Grafenwöhr Retiree Appreciation Day and Open House? This year's event will be held on Saturday, October 27th from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. There are plenty of events happening that day all designed with the military Retiree in mind.

Registration will be held from 7:30 am - 9:00 am at the Tower View Conference Center. The Vilseck JROTC Color Guard will post the Colors at 9:00 am followed by brief opening remarks by the USAG Grafenwöhr Garrison Commander, Colonel Brian T. Boyle, and Retiree Council President, James Federline. The informational booths will open at 9:30 am. There will be door prizes throughout the day and the names of the winners will be posted near the registration tables.

Have a pay problem? Need a new pink card? Want to sign up for a mailbox? ID Card expiring? Service providers will be available to answer questions, provide advice and assist Retirees in matters unique to our retiree population. Representatives on-site will include DFAS-Retired Pay, Federal Benefits Unit from the U.S. Consulate, Frankfurt (Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security Administration), Legal Assistance, ID Cards, IACS, Passport Office, Customs and the Army Post Office to name a few.

A Health Fair complete with medical/dental screenings and informational booths will be held at the brand new, state-of-the-art Grafenwöhr Health and Dental Clinics. Retirees will be able to register in advance for medical appointments to make better use of their time and eliminate the need for waiting. Appointments may be scheduled by calling the Grafenwöhr Health Clinic at 09641-83-7152 beginning September 23rd. There is a limited number of appointments to be filled on a "first-come, first serve" basis. Be sure to let them know it is for a Retiree Open House medical appointment when calling. Once appointments have been scheduled, medical staff will review your medical records and order labs to be drawn no later than 2 weeks before your appointment.

Dental screenings will be conducted on a "walk-in" basis in the morning from 0800-1130. Dental screenings will include an oral exam, x-rays, cleaning and simple fillings. Any follow-up appointments will be scheduled for the afternoon and will be at the discretion of the Dental Clinic Commander.

Many Retirees remember fondly "going to the field" in Grafenwöhr. But, have we changed! Tours of the "new" Grafenwöhr, the crown jewel of USAREUR, will also be available. No need to dig into those MREs though! Join us for a unique dining experience at our local dining facility.

There is also no need to drive your vehicle around post. Just park your car at one of the designated parking locations and ride our special event shuttle bus to your desired destination - leave the driving to us! Shuttle bus schedules will be available in your registration packet and at designated bus stops,

For more information, please contact the USAG Grafenwöhr Retirement Services Office at DSN 475-8539/8540 or civilian 09641-83-8539 or 8540. We may also be contacted via email at: usag.graf.rso@graf.eur.army.mil.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

HELPFUL HINTS TO BETTER ENJOY YOUR RETIREE OPEN HOUSE EXPERIENCE

- ❖ **ID CARDS:** Valid ID Cards are required to receive services from Legal Assistance, Customs, IACS, and to receive medical and/or dental care. To help ensure you have what you need to utilize these service providers, the ID Card Office, located in Building 244 (near Gate #3), will be open from 7:30 am to 3:30pm. For more information, call the ID Card Office at 09641-83-6550 or DSN 475-6550.
- ❖ **PASSPORTS:** If your passport has expired or is about to expire and you plan to apply for a new one, be sure to bring the following items with you: a money order for \$67, 2 – 2"x2" passport photos, and your current (or expired) passport. Without these items, your application cannot be processed. For more information on initial applications or renewal applications for family members, call the Passport Office at 09641-83-6202 or DSN 475-6202.
- ❖ **LEGAL ASSISTANCE:** Attorneys will be available to prepare wills and provide general legal counsel to retirees and their family members. If you are interested in doing a new will, you will need to complete the will worksheets and bring them with you. Worksheets may be obtained by contacting the USAG Grafenwöhr RSO.
- ❖ **INSTALLATION ACCESS:** If you do not have installation access due to a lost or expired ID card, you may be signed on the installation by an ID card holder with sign-in privileges. You will also need to be signed off the installation as well though the person signing you out does not need to be the same person who signed you on. So please remember, if you were signed in by someone and then received a new ID card, you still need to be signed out to close the access transaction.
- ❖ **REGISTRATION:** Be sure to register upon your arrival. The registration tables will be open from 7:30 am to 9:00 am. Packets complete with a listing of the day's events and maps will be available. Don't forget to enter for one of our many door prizes.
- ❖ **SHUTTLE BUSES:** Shuttle buses will be available to transport participants from the Tower View Conference Center, Building 244 (ID Cards/IACS), the medical/dental clinics, and the PX/Commissary complex. An additional stop at the dining facility will be added so participants can participate in the unique dining experience.
- ❖ **PARKING:** Participants are encouraged to park in one of our four designated parking areas at the Tower View Conference Center (parking may be limited at this location), the health/dental clinics, Building 244, or the PX/Commissary complex.
- ❖ **TRANSPORTATION FROM BERLIN:** The bus will depart the American Chapel on Huttenweg at 7:30 am on Friday, October 26 for Grafenwöhr. It will depart Grafenwöhr at 6:00pm on October 27. For more information, please contact Myrle Saunders, Volunteer Liaison RSO.
- ❖ **TRANSPORTATION FROM GARMISCH:** A bus will be provided if we have at least 45 participants from the Garmisch area. If you are interested in transportation, please contact Warren Harris at 08821-750-2577 or 08841-627367.
- ❖ **LODGING:** For those of you traveling a distance, lodging is available at the Tower View Inn. Reservations may be made by calling 09641-83-1700. Be sure to let them know it is for the Retiree Appreciation Day/Open House. If there is no availability at the Tower View, the reservation clerks can provide you with a listing of off-post accommodations in close proximity to the installation. Participants are responsible for making their own lodging arrangements.

POST EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY SHOPPING IN GERMANY AFTER RETIREMENT: Retired members of the U.S. military services, their accompanying dependents, and certain categories of widow(er)s, and unaccompanied dependents may be authorized use of PX (Post Exchange) and DeCA (Defense Commissary Agency) sales facilities in Germany under an agreement between the Customs Executive Agent and the German Ministry of Finance.

These arrangements also apply to "gray area" retirees (reservists who are otherwise eligible for retirement but are under 60 years of age), and do not apply to retired civilian employees. These rules do not apply in other countries.

For you and your dependents to shop in U.S. sales outlets, you must first obtain a U.S. Forces Verification of Status of U.S. Forces Retired Personnel/Unaccompanied Dependents (AE Form 550-175K) from military customs offices in Germany. For this, you will need your passport, retiree ID card, and you must intend to live in or visit Germany for 30 days or longer. Military widow(er)s must be residents of Germany. Take the verification to the German customs office serving your area of residence and you will receive a German Customs Certificate ("Pink Card"), which has an initial validity of two months. The "Pink Card" and your retiree ID card allow you access to post exchanges and commissaries in Germany where you may only purchase non-rationed items.

Information provided by the Grafenwöhr Military Customs Office

Welcome!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our retiree community in Garmisch and the surrounding areas formerly serviced by USAG Stuttgart! Please do not hesitate to contact the Garrison RSO or Grafenwöhr Retiree Council President with your ideas, concerns and/or issues!

HOW TO REPORT THE DEATH OF A RETIREE WITHIN THE USAG GRAFENWÖHR FOOTPRINT: In the event of the death of a Retiree, contact the USAG Grafenwöhr Casualty Office at 09641-83-8539 during duty hours (7:30 am - 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday, excluding Federal holidays) or 0162-296-0817 after duty hours. The Casualty Officer will appoint a Casualty Notification Officer and/or Casualty Assistance Officer as needed and notify the USAREUR CAC.

DEATH CERTIFICATES: When a retiree dies, it's important to obtain a death certificate from the nearest American Consulate. If the retiree dies in a German Hospital, nursing or senior's home etc, be sure the attending German physician includes a written clarification as to the specific cause of death, for example lung cancer. When applying for the death certificate from the American Consulate, the written clarification and the German death certificate must be attached to the application for official U.S. death certificate. A copy of the American death certificate is included with the applications for the various survivor benefits

(Reprinted from the USAG Heidelberg Retiree Newsletter)

Special Thanks!

This newsletter would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of Dave Stewart, Member-At-Large, Grafenwöhr Retiree Council. It is through the fruit of his labors that this edition of the Retiree Newsletter has come to fruition. Thank you, Dave!

A special thanks also goes out to our Retiree Council members. These enthusiastic, committed and highly motivated individuals are making great things happen in our community. They epitomize the Army slogan – Still Serving!